(c) if so, to what extent this decision of Government has been welcomed; and

(d) whether all the States have agreed to this proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (d) Central Government do not have any proposal under consideration for a uniform stamp duty regime of 5 per cent across all States to unearth black money and to develop a robust secondary market in real estate, as the matter relating to stamp duty on real estate transactions comes under the purview of the State Governments, by virtue of Entry 63 in List-II (State List) in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. Hence, it is for the State Governments to take a decision in the matter.

DA due to Central Government Employees

2217. SHRI LALIT SURI:
SHRI ABANI ROY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of additional dearness allowance/relief, in terms of the recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission that has become due to the Central Government employees and pensioners *w.e.f.* 1st January, 2005; and

(b) by when the announcement to release the same is likely to be made?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) Dearness Allowance (DA)/ Dearness Relief (DR) to Central Government Employees/Pensioners is revised twice a year from 1st January and 1st July and normally payable with salary for the months of March and September respectively. The revised amount of DA/DR will be notified at the appropriate time.

Traders' stir against service Tax

2218. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that traders have launched nation-wide stir to protest against the service tax imposed by the Centre;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the traders all over the country are miffed with Government's decision; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) Traders have been protesting against the shifting of liability of payment of service tax in certain situations, from Service Provider to the Service Receiver, in case of Goods Transport Agency Services.

(d) A Committee comprising representatives of department, transport agencies and traders had been constituted to look into the matter and suggest remedial measures.

Raise in gratuity limit

2219. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have considered any proposal to raise the gratuity limit consequent upon the merger of D.A. for Central Government employees;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that in similar circumstances in the past, Government had correspondingly raised gratuity limits without any reference to Pay body; and

(d) if so, the action proposed by Government in the matter this time

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) Yes, Sir